

Guest Editor's Introduction

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The original objective of this themed issue was to gather reflections on the reception of the work of Charles Baudelaire that in some guise or other departed from standard patterns, and, consequently, to focus on Baudelaire's reception with reference to particularities rather than paradigms. The call for submissions sought therefore to elicit contributions on the reception and translation of Baudelaire's work in overlooked and under-frequented places, on topics – those which follow were given by way of example in the call for submissions – involving non-standard cultures and patterns of translation of Baudelaire's work; the reception of Baudelaire's work in milieus underexplored or ignored by comparative scholarship; and unfamiliar Baudelaire(s): atypical reception of Baudelaire's work. The four essays and Afterword that comprise this issue achieve this objective in one way or another, while demonstrating that in order to be deemed non-standard, receptions do not have to take the form of dramatic or radical departures from established models of reception. This introduction will provide a context to the essays by considering firstly the recent and current position of reception studies within the context of comparative literature and secondly developments in the study of the reception of Baudelaire during the last few years. It will conclude with a review of the essays and Afterword individually and in relation to each other.

RECEPTION STUDIES AND COMPARATIVE LITERATURE

'The study of reception', wrote Elinor Shaffer in 2006, 'has been one of the dominant modes of literary enquiry in the last thirty-five years, from the ground-breaking work by the Constance School.'¹ Shaffer's affirmation remains valid nearly ten years after it was made, as the unabated momentum of reception studies demonstrates. The acknowledgement of the importance of the study of literary reception(s) in the context of modern comparative criticism, however, goes back to long before the field's reconfiguration and re-conceptualization from the 1970s under the impulse of Wolfgang Iser and Hans-Robert Jauss and, from another perspective, empiricists on both sides of the Atlantic.² At least, this claim stands up to scrutiny inasmuch as the study of reception functions as a challenge – and this is the way in which comparative literature has largely and more or less consciously understood it since the study of reception replaced the study of influence³ – to the culturally proprietorial view (what Giorgio Agamben has referred to as the 'originary fiction'⁴) that the value and significance of literature is determined first and foremost by national provenance (and language); that is, by the milieu from which it supposedly emanates and by the community of reception of that milieu. As long ago as 1913, for example, José Martínez Ruiz took issue with Englishman George Meredith's claim that 'para juzgar una obra nacional, nadie mejor que los nacionales del país de que se trate' ('there is no-one better qualified to judge a national work of art than the natives of the country in question'), on the grounds that

muchas veces es indispensable venir de fuera para ver las cosas que antes, teniéndolas constantemente ante los ojos, no veíamos. [...] Y muchas veces un extranjero que hace un juicio de impresión rápida, precipitada, sobre un pueblo, suele poner en él más esencia de ese pueblo – aunque el juicio esté lleno de errores, trabucaciones y negligencias – que cualquier natural del propio país, empapado de su arte, de su historia y de sus costumbres.⁵

(Often it is only the perspective of the outsider that allow us to see things that, because they were constantly present, had become invisible to us. [...] And often a conclusion formulated by a foreigner – albeit one full of misconceptions, gross generalizations and oversights – regarding a country on the basis of a hasty glance captures the essence of that country better than the judgment of a native steeped in that country's art, history and customs.)

Almost a century later, Els Andringa, referring to Dutch reception of foreign literature, echoes implicitly *Azorín's* position when she writes that '[t]he transfer of a foreign literary work into such a mutable and evolving cultural space with its many shifting subsystems constitutes a crucial part of any work's "career"'. 'What is particularly fascinating to observe', Andringa continues, 'is how a work of literature sediments itself in such new environments, inspiring fresh evaluations that reflect on the receiving socio-cultural field, revealing as much about the aesthetic potential of the text as about the structures and processes underlying the receiving socio-cultural field.'⁶ Reception studies, both commentators would agree, reveal how 'external' readings can expand the meaning of literature and enrich its understanding.

The study of literary reception remains at the heart of comparative literary methodology today even in the so-called Anglosphere, in which the prevailing Anglophone cultural hegemony has fostered, arguably, a perspective from which systematic explorations beyond the national or, more specifically, a linguistic framework might appear to be mere critical exoticism or an opportunistic excuse to parade cosmopolitan virtuosity.⁷ Yet reception studies pose a timely and systematic challenge to the more dubious consequences – which include some ways of understanding and configuring 'World' literature as (again) a Western project⁸ – of this and other cultural and linguistic hegemonies, positing a view of literature as fundamentally, unconditionally and even essentially transnational. Failure to recognize this has become a hallmark of criticism written under the auspices of hegemony, as Rüdiger Görner notes in his review of Jane Goldman's *Modernism, 1910-1945. Image to Apocalypse*: '[A] meaningful definition of modernism must appreciate its essentially transnational and intercultural dimension. In that respect Jane Goldman's [...] approach is decidedly insular. [...] It would have been much more honest if the title of Goldman's study indicated that she is, in fact, mainly talking about Modernism in the Anglophone world.'⁹

Peter France reiterates this point from a slightly different angle in a review of an English translation of Pascale Casanova's *La République mondiale des lettres* in the same issue of the journal: '[I]ts [the English translation of work] French and European perspective, and not least the evidence for the centrality of Paris, will be a valuable corrective to the tendency of English speakers to see English literature (or literature in English) as a self sufficient system.'¹⁰

In this spirit, it has been argued in recent years that reception studies is a crucial instrument in overcoming the factors and forces that inhibit a transnational and intercultural perspective in literary studies, citing in particular the demonstrable benefits of exploring the fortune of a national literature in other environments. Reception studies within comparative literature, suggests Elinor Shaffer, might well awaken British English scholars to the 'reach' of English literature by extending national literary history 'to the unfamiliar, often unexpected and illuminating responses abroad to the works of British writers', without which such a history 'is simply incomplete'.¹¹ In a similar vein, Shaffer advocates 'the de-centring of national cultural production through its systematic displacement to an inter- or transnational context of reception, laying the foundations for 'large-scale comparative research dealing with such issues as value and the transfer not just of economic but also intellectual capital'.¹²

Notwithstanding the contextual timeliness of the exogenous turn of perspective outlined above, it does not negate or diminish the value of intrasystemic receptions, that is, receptions of writers or works within rather than across borders. Irrespective of their intrinsic value, intrasystemic receptions provide extremely useful points of reference (as does, for instance, the study of Seillière's reception of Baudelaire in this special issue) within the potentially limitless geo-cultural sphere of one writer's or an oeuvre's reception, not least because on occasions they serve as *points de départ* (as have done French receptions of Baudelaire) for reception in other environments. Consider in the case of Baudelaire, for example, the inestimable value in this regard of André Guyaux's compendious *Baudelaire: Un Demi-Siècle de lectures des Fleurs du mal (1855-1905)*¹³ or his co-edited volume *Lire le Spleen de Paris*.¹⁴ A writer's reception is, ultimately, the sum total of all instances of reception and of the interactions between them. A reception studies that takes this into account relativizes adequately the geo-cultural frontiers that the national paradigm is prone to project on to or draw between literary systems.

BAUDELAIRE AND RECEPTION

The field of Baudelaire studies has been a net beneficiary of the recent swell in the undiminished tide of reception studies. In December 2011, the conference 'Baudelaire dans le monde', sponsored by the Sorbonne, the Sorbonne Nouvelle and the W. T. Bandy Center for Modern French and Baudelaire Studies (formerly the W. T. Bandy Center for Baudelaire Studies), Vanderbilt University, Nashville, brought together in Paris specialists in the reception and translation of Baudelaire from across the globe in an event that celebrated consciously as well as incidentally the 'new' comparative literature's move beyond Eurocentrism and even from the binary of East-West into a wider world of reception, transmission, dissemination, consecration, canonization, suppression and stigmatization of the French poet's work.¹⁵ This gathering could not have taken place had not sufficient scholarly interest in Baudelaire's reception existed on an international level. In one area of geo-cultural research alone – the reception and translation of Baudelaire in Spain and the Hispanic world – the last decade has witnessed a substantial increase in scholarly enterprise, with the publication of works such as David Marin's monograph on translations of *Les Fleurs du Mal* in Spain (2007) and José Morales Saravia's edited volume of essays on the reception of Baudelaire in the Hispanic world (2009), not to mention more recent outputs such as Jesús Belotto's doctoral thesis on the translation of the prose poems in Spain (2013) as well as publication projects in various stages of preparation.¹⁶ Recent Swedish interest in the topic can also be found.¹⁷ Beyond the confines of European receptions of Baudelaire, Gloria Bien's 2013 study of Baudelaire in China heralds an important geo-cultural extension of the topic's frame of reference.¹⁸

The advent of Polysystems Theory, with its emphasis on what reception reveals about the receptive community, together with the rise of postcolonial studies, which linked, albeit indirectly, the context of modernity within which Baudelaire's work emerged and was subsequently read, to notions of imperial hegemony (waxing or waning) and colonial subjugation, may go some way towards an explanation of such upsurges in scholarly interest: the uncertainties, tensions and opportunities that characterize postcolonial identities – and, indeed, the frequently complex ambivalence of post-imperial identities – are anxieties that colour communities' receptions of foreign works of literature and, for example, the place that translated literature occupies in the literary system.¹⁹ But another factor may be at play here: such is the extent and the degree of Baudelaire's consecration, not least in the guise of a founding figure of modernism in the arts, that one is obliged to ask whether at least in some

circumstances it would be more appropriate to refer to the 'consumption' of Baudelaire than to speak of 'reception'. Certainly, as Commodity Baudelaire's share price remains strong and even rises in the stock market of cultural capital, receptions run the risk of becoming more standardized, reiterative, recycled and derivative; receptions more akin to appropriations than explorations. This tendency, I would venture to suggest, had already become apparent in certain studies ostensibly devoted to exploring Baudelaire's reception but in which Baudelaire functions primarily as an instrumental component – an index of modernity – and in which the study of reception is used as a pretext to measure a cultural community's – the receptors' – degree of engagement with or participation in modernity. This should not be taken to mean that recourse to Baudelaire in this guise in some way invalidates such undertakings as studies of reception. On the contrary, the aforementioned function is one that reception studies may usefully perform. There is, however, reason and scope to challenge an excessive and particularly automatic recourse to Baudelaire's sub-consecration as founding figure of artistic modernity under the pretext of studying reception, because Baudelaire thus configured runs the risk of becoming a stultified entity, a fixed, enshrined yardstick of modernity, a mere diagnostic tool as it were. 'Baudelaire-as-archetypal-modernist', if used without due reflection, may impose an interpretative lens that suppresses or excludes the particularities, singularities and idiosyncrasies of reception, and either dismisses as irrelevant or has no means to deal, at least adequately, with evidence that does not or cannot readily contribute to the 'modernity' debate.²⁰ This, it is reasonable to affirm, is why the study of less conventional instances of Baudelaire's reception, even ones that do not stray too far from exploration of conventional environments of reception (responses in scholarship, citation, allusion and other manifestations of intertextuality in high cultural production), are not only important but timely. Curiously enough, the themed issue of *Comparative Critical Studies*, 3.3 (2006), 'Comparative Reception Studies Today', touches, albeit unconsciously, on all these issues: none of the essays wander beyond the conventional objects of scholarly enquiry in their selection of work(s) received and receptive work(s), and among them there are those that consider these works as paradigmatic templates within a systemic context and those that explore the particularities of specific instances of reception beyond or regardless of such templates.

THE ESSAYS

The four essays and Afterword in the present themed issue of *Comparative Critical Studies* consider reception in cultural production (music, poetry, literary translation) and/or in critical discourse. They comply with the rubric of this themed issue through their exploration of instances of reception that refer to the specific as opposed to the paradigmatic reception of Baudelaire.

The essays, in addition to representing the reception of Baudelaire in a variety of discursive and trans-discursive contexts or settings, cover a number of geo-cultural domains, exploring instances of reception and/or translation in French, Italian, North-American and Anglo-Indian environments. In each case, however, the essays deal primarily with one particular recipient and with a Baudelaire who remains, first and foremost, the poet of *Les Fleurs du Mal*.

Joseph Acquisto's examination of the reception of Baudelaire in the writings of the conservative French critic Ernest Seillière and, by way of counterpoint, those of Benjamin Fondane, explores a decade – the 1930s – when French critical emphasis on Baudelaire's classicism, Catholicism and mysticism (which, we are informed, is epitomized by Paul Valéry) had given way to emphasis on the French poet's Romantic characteristics, in this

particular case in a censorial guise. The essay takes as its pivotal concept danger, or more precisely dangers, not only those posed by Baudelaire's poetry but also those inherent in Seillière's 'critical blind spots', which are considered against the backdrop of the shifting ideological climate of pre-WWII Europe, a context in which Baudelaire's sense of evil and existential anguish became visible once more through the cracks in the increasingly fissured façade of a decaying but persistent bourgeois rationalism, much as the ambivalent charms of Baudelaire's 'mendiant rousse' revealed themselves through the female beggar's tattered garments. Acquisto locates the singularity of Seillière's reception in its systematic attempt to construct an image of an immature, *ergo* dangerously irresponsible Baudelaire exemplifying 'the nefarious late Romanticism Seillière sees operating in culture to the detriment of reason'. Seillière's dismissal of (rather than engagement with) 'difficult truths' articulated in Baudelaire's work, Acquisto argues, derives from the critic's unwavering faith in 'a certain strand of Enlightenment thought, albeit one that allows for mainstream [...] Catholicism to be maintained' and in 'a vision of progress that Baudelaire constantly and categorically rejects'. The essay's contrapuntal analysis of Fondane's response to Baudelaire – eclipsed at the time of its publication by Sartre's seminal study,²¹ we learn – demonstrates how, unlike Seillière, Fondane took seriously, not dismissively, Baudelaire's 'metaphysical crisis' as a demonstration of the reality of an evil impervious to the assaults of reason and progress – a reality that Seillière's bourgeois optimistic positivism, if it may be so designated, strives to deny and hide.

Interestingly, Acquisto's essay explores facets of Baudelaire labelled Romantic by Seillière that attracted attention earlier in some other national and linguistic communities where 'discovery', in the later decades of the nineteenth century, of French literature from Romanticism onwards, in more than one case led to the relatively sudden acquisition of an anachronistic stockpile of Francophone literary wealth of which the recipient community was left to make aesthetic sense. The fear that real ideological and moral dangers were inherent in late- and post-Romantic aesthetics, not least those of Baudelaire, was palpable in the constructions, deriving from the more traditionalist sectors of the aforementioned communities, of ideologically subversive – satanic, vice-ridden, nihilistic, pathological – Francophone writers that populate the critical writings of establishment (bourgeois, conservative, conventionally religious) commentators. Seillière's concept of Art for Art's sake, as Acquisto evokes it, bears a striking and even uncanny resemblance to that of Spaniard Juan Valera, one of a number of Baudelaire's fin-de-siècle Hispanic critical nemeses, for whom artistic beauty and moral goodness inevitably (or must be made to) coincide and who would also have advocated Seillière's 'social and sociable laugh' by way of response and antidote to Baudelaire's existential malaise.²² Fondane's rejection of Seillière's 'pathological' interpretation of Baudelaire, on the other hand, has a tentative precursor in José María Llanas Aguilaniedo's claim that expression of the *mal du siècle* was not a symptom of a reprehensible, degenerate malady corroding the foundations of civilization but the consequence of the bourgeois world order's repression and suppression of artistic and intellectual enlightenment.²³

There follows an essay that shares a number of features with Acquisto's. Andrea Schellino's study of Baudelaire and Mario Praz also explores a reception from the 1930s, and again one that breaks with a preceding tradition of critical reception. Both essays interpret Baudelaire's work with reference to Romanticism and focus on its more macabre and angst-ridden dimensions, albeit from markedly different perspectives. At first glance, the choice of Mario Praz, the eminent Italian historian of literature and culture, to exemplify a non-conventional reception of Baudelaire may appear an unusual one. In his day however, argues Schellino, Praz orchestrated a paradigm shift by breaking with Sainte-Beuve's stylization of Baudelaire as a 'simply an epigone' and with 'those who, since the late nineteenth century,

have tried to “rehabilitate” Baudelaire, exalting his stylistic classicism’ or, in effect, canonizing him – an ambition culminating in Marcel Proust. Praz, propounds Schellino, considered Baudelaire’s work from a thematic rather than a stylistic perspective, which allowed him to discern in the Frenchman’s work a continuation of the preoccupations of early Romanticism, the Gothic and even the Baroque – a literary historical positioning of Baudelaire not too distant from that identified by Acquisto in Seillière. Praz, then, sees in Baudelaire’s work a revitalization of earlier traditions. Schellino’s analysis of Baudelaire’s place in the critical works of Mario Praz, particularly in his seminal study *La carne, la morte e il diavolo nella letteratura romantica* (better known to Anglophone readers as *The Romantic Agony*) is complemented by a study of Praz’s translations of poems by Baudelaire, also original in that the choice to produce rhyming versions constituted a bold departure from the less challenging path of prose rendition that other Italian translators had opted for.

The editors of Penguin Classics’ volume *Baudelaire in English* observe in their introduction that ‘for readers in the puritanical societies of the Anglo-Saxon world before 1939 Baudelaire first represented the model of the intellectual bohemian: not one of the carefree characters of Murger or Du Maurier but as man sunk in dangerous dissipation and haunted by self-doubt and fear of madness’.²⁴ For early English-speaking discoverers of the Frenchman’s work, they add, ‘reading Baudelaire was a dangerous adventure’ (p. xviii), and a mere decade after Swinburne introduced Baudelaire to Anglophone readers in 1861, critical response was strongly inflected by the views of ‘*bien-pensant* moralists’ who ‘excoriate[d] Baudelaire as a corrupting influence on English letters’ (p. xxix) – a radical negative reaction in spite of ‘general unfamiliarity with French poetry’ (p. xxxi) among critics as well as the reading public: ‘The British public’s awareness of contemporary French poetry’, the editors specify, ‘was at nearly a low ebb in the mid-nineteenth century as at the end of the twentieth’ (p. xxviii), and it was not until 1894 that a ‘sizeable selection of Baudelaire in English’ that stood to mitigate this situation through the provision of translations was produced (p. xxxi). It is in relation to this context, that of ‘the poet’s [Baudelaire’s] reception in mid-Victorian England’ and ‘of the reception of his poetry in England in the years following his death’, that Michael Tilby’s essay considers English-language translations of two Baudelaire poems that, quite incidentally, are not among the selection included in *Baudelaire in English*. They appeared in *A Sheaf Gleaned in French Fields*, an anthology of predominantly nineteenth-century French poems in translation, published first in India (first edition 1876, expanded posthumous edition 1878) and subsequently in Britain (1880), and compiled by young Bengali writer Toru Dutt (1856-1877). Tilby, in considering Dutt’s English-language versions of ‘La Cloche fêlée’ and ‘L’Homme et la mer’, also gives due attention to the contemporary French perspective on these translations of Francophone literature. Focusing on the readiness with which British and also some French critics lavished praise on Dutt’s work, Tilby probes in particular their assumptions regarding the originality of her acclaimed critical commentaries on the translations, which, it is demonstrated in this essay, were largely and predominantly unacknowledged calques of or borrowings from a limited range of French-authored anthologies, notably Eugène Crépet’s *Les Poètes français*, published between 1861 and 1863 and to which Baudelaire was also a contributor. Tilby’s aim is ‘to demonstrate that an understanding of the significance of Dutt’s translations of Baudelaire [...] is dependent on a more informed account of the contents of her anthology, and of the sources from which they were taken, than has hitherto been provided’. ‘[T]he claim traditionally made for Dutt as a surprisingly well-informed and discerning critic of French poetry’, argues Tilby, ‘is, to a certain extent, misplaced.’ This, he attributes to ‘the existence [on both sides of the Channel] of a “Toru Dutt story” that attracted critics, who, for all their eminence, were [...] journalists whose articles stood to attract attention when focused on novel or unusual subject matter’. ‘Such a deep-seated belief in Toru’s originality’, concludes Tilby,

‘cannot be sustained’, whence his affirmation of ‘[t]he need [...] for correction of the myth of Dutt’s rare critical discernment.’

Tilby’s essay establishes the unconventional character of this instance of reception in two ways: firstly, it departs from the tendency, apparent in the few broad studies that have been made of Baudelaire’s reception in the British literary system, to concentrate on reception in ‘Anglo-Saxon’ translators and critics: ‘Although *A Sheaf* occupies a cherished place in the history of Anglo-Indian literature,’ Tilby observes, ‘it has been the subject of comparative neglect in wider accounts of the English reception of French poetry in the nineteenth century’ in spite of eulogistic reviews that included the claims both hyperbolically bold – ‘in intellectual power Toru Dutt was one of the most remarkable women that have lived’ – and culturally patronizing: Dutt’s sister’s translation of Victor Hugo’s ‘Autre chanson’, one commentator claimed, ‘could hardly be improved by a practised poet of English birth’; secondly, the essay focuses on a translator who in effect straddled two national literary systems, the French one as well as the British, without being a ‘native’ member of either.

With Helen Abbott’s essay the focus moves to the field of musical adaptations of Baudelaire’s poetry to explore settings of the poems within contexts of twentieth-century avant-garde music. These contexts, Abbott observes, can in turn be placed within the broader historical frame of Baudelaire’s long historical relationship with music, one which moved beyond an initial vogue for ‘simple salon songs’ to late nineteenth-century composers’ ambition to ‘make greater technical and interpretative demands of singers and pianists’ that responded to the complexities of Baudelaire’s verse. The subsequent impact of Baudelaire’s poetry on song composition, however, argues Abbott, ‘remains largely overlooked by critical scholarship’, an omission that can be redressed ‘[b]y privileging the peripheries of music associated with Baudelaire, and specifically music inspired by Baudelaire’s poetry well beyond his own era and country’. North American composer Ruth White’s *Flowers of Evil* (1969) is the album selected to launch this initiative, on several grounds:

(a) White’s experiments with electronic musical technology foreground appositely ‘the shifting boundaries of aural landscapes derived from Baudelaire’s verse’.

(b) the album constitutes a form of reception that involves not only composition but translation. The context of White’s reception of Baudelaire, Abbott argues, is the international dissemination, both geographical and linguistic, of Baudelaire’s poetry from the beginning of the twentieth century. This, it is observed, places the role of the translator on a par with that of the composer in a mutual undertaking that assigns to both activities the role of “‘literary critics” or “critical readers” of Baudelaire’s work’, thereby allowing ‘the hypothesis that the composer-translator adds further layers of complexity to the voices of his [Baudelaire’s] poetry, in such a way as to create increasingly challenging soundworlds which shatter the already fragile categories of “poetry” and “music” as distinct elements’.

(c) This work, like other ‘popular and/or experimental dimensions of the reception of Baudelaire’s poetry in musical contexts’, has been afforded ‘scant [critical] attention’, possibly because ‘scholars have often struggled to reconcile [popular settings of Baudelaire’s poetry] with the seemingly intense “literariness” of his poetry’. This tension, Abbott observes in a comment most apposite in the context of this special issue, derives from an ‘important reception context for Baudelaire’s poetry’, that of ‘the reception patterns of the general public in France’, weaned on ‘highly “singable” text-setting techniques’ – a context with which ‘critical-academic discourse on Baudelaire and song’, which remains wedded to ‘aesthetic hierarchies of art song and popular song’, finds it difficult to reconcile itself.

(d) There are few points of reference, the author of this essay explains, against which to measure the unusual character of this reception, ‘White’s supposed “strangeness”’, as it were. Abbott’s solution is to contra- and juxtapose with White’s album two more experimental

adaptations by US composers, Gideon (1963) and Diamanda Galás (1982), of which succinct but instructive and illuminating comparative commentaries are elaborated.

Yvonne Boyer's Afterword explores an intriguing manifestation of Baudelaire's reception: the enthusiasm and dedication of one North American Francophile scholar, W. T. Bandy, out of which has grown, in effect, an institution, a research and resource centre that in turn maintains and sustains an ongoing programme of reception of Baudelaire's work from which has emerged the greatest single collection of material comprising and about Baudelaire's work in the world; and this, moreover (if it matters), in an environment that possesses none of the conventional geographical or cultural credentials often associated with such sites of systematic reception, such as birthplace (The Shakespeare Birthplace Trust in Stratford upon Avon, the D. H. Lawrence archives at Nottingham University, the Samuel Johnson House-Museum in Lichfield, to cite but three examples from the English Midlands). In this sense the Center epitomizes the kind of environment – a *site* of reception in the literal as well as figurative sense of the word – in which advocates of reception studies as a means to transcend the 'originary fiction's claim to primacy in determining a literature's meaning find corroboration of their position.

'ET PUIS, ET PUIS ENCORE?'

The essays in this special issue demonstrate that even with reference to high cultural production and myriad explorations of scholarly critical practice, the subject of Baudelaire's reception is far from exhausted. But the international consecration of the author of *Les Fleurs du Mal* has spread into the sphere of more popular culture, not least because of Baudelaire's work's 'alternative' appeal – an appeal that it demonstrated even before alternative – counter- and sub- – cultures came into prominence in the scholarly realm.

Manifestations of Baudelaire's expansion from 'high' canonical to 'popular' iconic status are manifold. The cover of Cuban 'nuevo trovador' Gerardo Alfonso's 2009 album *La cima* ('Peak') shows the musician against a background comprising a 'mountain' – hence the album's title – made up of 210 images of emblematic and/or iconic figures, from Pope John Paul II to Kurt Cobain. Among these, exactly half way up the mountain, 105 of 210, at a mid-point between Halle Berry (1) and Rudyard Kipling (210) sits Nadar's emblematic portrait of Baudelaire. In one sense, the album cover invites itself to be read visually as a personal canon in pictorial form. Alfonso's commentary on the album, however, counters the assumption that the 'mountain' is a conical hall of fame celebrating many instances of individual enterprise, inferring instead that taken collectively, the figures represent 'la quimérica y cuestionable meta que es alcanzar la tan anhelada cima' ('the elusive and questionable aim of reaching the much-desired peak'), as the musician characterizes this ambition by way of summarizing a musical project inspired by a reflection on that very ambition.²⁵ This suggests that the figures are canonical figures *qua* canonical figures as much as or rather than Alfonso's *phares*, a gesture that has about it more of an acknowledgment and appropriation of Baudelaire's cultural capital (a factor that, according to David Marín, motivated much recent translation of Baudelaire in Spain²⁶) than of a particularizing and particularized representation of Baudelaire's impact. This reception-as-appropriation is evident in other popular contexts, such as blogs, social media and indeed ephemera such as Baudelaire 'merchandising'. Yvonne Boyer's Afterword lists ephemera among the many items that have found their way into the Bandy Baudelaire archive, and although these do not constitute a substantial part of the collection, the reference to such items duly accords a place to such objects in the panoply of manifestations of reception. Scholarship has not been blind to the importance and significance of ephemera in the construction of iconic artistic identities but it cannot yet be

said that Baudelaire has benefitted from thorough examination from such a perspective.²⁷ Ephemera provide a singular insight into what Baudelaire means to and within a particular socio-cultural community, and they are not in this phase of the age of the internet as ‘loin des pioches et des sondes’ as one might imagine: prompted by curiosity to find out how readily one might obtain the T-Shirt emblazoned with an image of Félix Nadar’s portrait of Baudelaire that I had been given as a gift. I soon discovered that, whether the market for such products is or is not niche or the province of literary ‘nerds’, the item appears to be in relatively abundant supply. The limited number of English-, French- and Spanish-language websites I accessed offered T-shirts not only with images of Baudelaire but with pithy quotations from his works (the *Journaux intimes* were a popular source); and not only T-shirts but other items of clothing, including underwear, mugs, and even babies’ bibs and babygros. For the purist, it may be difficult to reconcile a portrait of Baudelaire staring out from an undergarment with the concept of reception. But is this any less an instance of reception than a brief quotation from one of Baudelaire’s prose poems in a literary magazine or a newspaper, such as the reference to the prose poem ‘Enivrez-vous’ in a 1899 issue of *Revista vinícola ilustrada*, a Spanish wine producers’ and merchants’ periodical preserved in the *Biblioteca virtual de la prensa histórica*,²⁸ the Spanish Ministry of Culture’s digital periodical press repository? Every instance and every item has its reception-story to tell about how Baudelaire’s work was – or is – perceived.

¹ Elinor Shaffer, ‘Introduction’, *Comparative Critical Studies. Comparative Reception Studies Today*, 3.3 (2006), 191-198 (p. 191).

² The empirical research of Norbert Groeben and Siegfried J. Schmidt, perhaps eclipsed to some degree by the work of Iser and Jauss, falls into this category, as might also the psychologically-grounded ‘reader response theory’ of North American scholars David Bleich and Norman Holland; though it might be argued, as Elrud Ibsch speculates, that the empiricism of this method is more apparent than real and that ‘dialogical hermeneutics’ is possibly a more accurate description. See Elrud Ibsch, ‘La réception littéraire’, in *Théorie littéraire*, edited by Marc Angenot, Jean Bessière, Douwe Fokkema and Eva Kushner (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1989), pp. 249-271 (p. 264).

³ Elrud Ibsch identifies Dionyz Durišin’s re-theorization (1972) of influence in terms of the instance of reception rather than of influence determined by source (work or author) as the moment at which influence studies, already assailed by a number of increasingly irrefutable accusations, accepted defeat in the face of the charge of unilateralism, and made way for reception studies (Ibsch, ‘La réception littéraire’, p. 250).

⁴ Agamben uses this term when explaining how the concept of the refugee can serve to destabilize the sense of ‘sovereignty’ underlying the national paradigm, because ‘refugees disturb the operations and, indeed, the very concept of the nation-state; and they do this ‘because by breaking the continuity between man and citizen, *nativity* and *nationality* [...] they put the originary fiction of modern sovereignty in crisis’ (*Homo Sacer*, translated by Daniel Heller-Roazen (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998), p. 131, cited in Thomas Docherty, ‘Within and Beyond Compare’, *Comparative Critical Studies*, 3.1-2 (2006), 25-35 (p. 30)). Docherty himself, in the same article, attacks this ‘chthonic nativity’ (p. 30), the persistence of which, many comparatists believe, sustains the questionable prioritization of social and historical frame over cultural production on which rests the so-called national paradigm in literary studies,

⁵ José Martínez Ruiz, ‘El teatro clásico’, in *Clásicos y modernos*, sixth edition (Buenos Aires: Losada, 1971), pp. 101-104 (pp. 101-102). Unless otherwise stated, all translations are my own.

⁶ Els Andringa, “‘For God’s and Virginia’s sake why a translation?’ – Virginia Woolf’s Transfer to the Low Countries”, *Comparative Critical Studies*, 3.3 (2006), 201-226 (p. 202)

⁷ This phenomenon is not new. ‘Although English literature has absorbed many foreign influences in the course of its long history,’ observed Elinor Shaffer as long ago as 1979, ‘the emphasis on native tradition in the most extensive and powerful literature in the world has sometimes seemed to impede the recognition of foreign literature.’ (‘Editor’s Note: Comparative Literature in Britain’, *Comparative Criticism*, 1 (1979), xv-xxi (p. xv).

⁸ See Elinor Shaffer, ‘World Literature Tomorrow’, *Comparative Critical Studies*, 3.1-2 (2006), 77-82 (pp. 77, 81); Robert Weninger, ‘Editor’s Introduction’, *Comparative Critical Studies*, 3.1-2 (2006), xi-xix (p. xv); Lucia Boldrini, ‘Comparative Literature in the Twenty-First Century: A View from Europe and the UK’, *Comparative Critical Studies*, 3.1-2 (2006), 13-23 (p. 15); Stefan Herbrechter, Ivan Callus and Manuela Rossini, ‘European

Posthumanism', *The European Literary Messenger*, 21.1 (2012), 10-11 (p. 10); Sowon S. Park, 'The Adaptive Comparative', *Comparative Critical Studies*, 12.2 (2015), 183-196 (p. 184).

⁹ Rüdiger Görner, review of Jane Goldman, *Modernism, 1910-1945. Image to Apocalypse* (London and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), *Comparative Critical Studies*, 3.3 (2006), 419-422 (p. 420).

¹⁰ Peter France, review of Pascale Casanova, *The World Republic of Letters*, translated by M. B. DeBevoise (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2004), *Comparative Critical Studies*, 3.3 (2006), 426-429 (p. 429).

¹¹ Shaffer, 'World Literature Tomorrow', p. 79.

¹² Shaffer, 'World Literature Tomorrow', p. 81.

¹³ Paris: Presses Universitaires de l'Université de Paris-Sorbonne, 2007.

¹⁴ *Lire le Spleen de Paris*, edited by André Guyaux and Henri Scépi (Paris: Presses Universitaires de Paris-Sorbonne, 2014).

¹⁵ Papers presented at the conference covered Baudelaire's reception in a number of national environments – Italy, Spain, Brazil, Romania, Greece, Slovenia, Germany, Austria, Iran and Japan – as well as in the work of a number of individuals whose receptions might equally have been placed within the context of particular literary systems.

¹⁶ David Marín Hernández, *La recepción y traducción de Les Fleurs du mal en España* (Málaga: Miguel Gómez, 2007); *Un Baudelaire hispánico. Caminos receptivos de la modernidad literaria*, edited by José Morales Saravia (San Marcos: Lima, 2009); Jesús Belotto Martínez, 'La traducción y recepción del poema en prosa en España: *Le Spleen de Paris* de Charles Baudelaire', Unpublished PhD Thesis, University of Alicante, 2013. See also Encarnación Medina Arjona, 'Las flores del mal. De consolidación y continuidad». I. Lectura. Recepción de Baudelaire en España, 120-124 and 'Las flores del mal. De consolidación y continuidad». II. 'Anotaciones', *Rapsoda. Revista de literatura*, 1 (2009), 120-124 and 135-231 respectively; and Katharina Niemeyer and Klaus Meyer-Minnemann, '„Unheimlich“, „metaphysisch“, modern. Zur Rezeption Baudelaires in Spanien', *Romanistisches Jahrbuch*, 63.1 (2013), 334-363.

¹⁷ Paul Tenngart, 'Distributing Evil Flowers: Charles Baudelaire in Swedish Translation', *Journal of Literature and Art Studies*, 2.2 (February 2012), 340-350.

¹⁸ Gloria Bien, *Baudelaire in China: A Study in Literary Reception* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2013). Haun Saussy, in a review of this work (*Modern Philology*, 112.1 (2014), E104-E106) acknowledges that this work 'has taken up a major theme of international literary history' (p. E104) and commends its 'generosity toward the non-specialist' (p. E105) but concludes that questions that would help to 'weigh the value of that [Baudelaire's] contribution' (E106) might have been pursued further. The study nonetheless traces some coordinates of Baudelaire's reception in China that are very useful for the scholar not familiar with that context. For another review of Bien's work, see Mabel Lee, 'Trekking through Modern Chinese Literary History with Baudelaire's *Les Fleurs du mal*', *China Review International*, 19.4 (2012), 509-513.

¹⁹ Translation Studies' interest in such questions shows just how far its sphere of operation and that of reception studies overlap. To cite but one example, Clem Robyns's classification of host literary system responses to translated literature as 'four main attitudes towards discursive migration' offers what might equally be called a taxonomy of modes of reception of (translated) literature. See Robyns, 'Translation and Discursive Identity' in *Translation and the (Re)production of Culture*, edited by Clem Robyns (Leuven: CERA, 1994, pp. 57-81 (p. 60).

²⁰ Andrew Gibson, in his review article on *The Reception of James Joyce in Europe* (edited by Geert Lernout and Wim Van Mierlo, *Comparative Critical Studies*, 3.3 (2006), 393-401), recognizes that James Joyce has been treated in a similar manner. The collection of essays in this edited volume, Gibson concludes, 'substantially promotes a time-honoured Joyce as European Modernist. [... O]ne learns hugely from Lernout and Van Mierlo's collection, but not chiefly about Joyce' (p. 338). Yet, in spite of this, the collection unintentionally subverts the petrification of Joyce, in that

The Reception of James Joyce in Europe does not so much promote an abstract European modernist Joyce as it explodes it, or, at least, leaves it in an advanced state of disintegration. There was no single European Joyce, other than as a Paris-centred fantasy. The actual, diverse European Joyces with which these essays present us are in one sense more interesting than that one (p. 400).

Gibson attributes advocacy of the paradigm of a European modernist Joyce to a 'politics of authority' that one might argue also applies in the case of Baudelaire-as-index-of-modernity, and one that 'traditionally disempowered and "marginal" cultures' should resist and circumvent rather than buy into:

[T]here is always a politics of authority at stake in the conception of Joyce as European modernist. It privileges a very few centres of European culture, Paris above all, at the massive expense of others. It is ethno-centric and patronizing. There is much to be learnt, on the other hand, with reference specifically to Joyce and Irish writing,

from the traditionally disempowered and ‘marginal’ cultures of Europe. Joyceans should be listening to them much more than they have done so far, for they understand matters that the rest of us don’t, but that Joyce understood. [...] [O]nce we have deconstructed the politics of authority in the Joyce world, we are inevitably drawn back to what I would call a partial and qualified recognition of the authority of the local (pp. 400-401).

²¹ Jean Paul Sartre, *Baudelaire* (Paris: Gallimard, 1947).

²² Valera’s singular vision of ‘art for art’s sake’ envisaged a form of artistic beauty inseparable from moral good: ‘[E]s lo cierto que la poesía’, he wrote, ‘aun para los que seguimos la doctrina del arte por el arte, no es, en el más lato sentido, independiente de la moral’ (‘What is certain is that poetry, even for those of us who ascribe to the doctrine of art for art’s sake, cannot be independent of morality’) (Juan Valera, *Obras completas*, 2 vols (Madrid: Aguilar, 1942), II, 830; hereafter *OC*). He goes on to explain the relationship between poetry and morality. Poetry, he clarifies,

[n]o se pone a su servicio ni la toma como fin, porque su fin está en ella; pero la poesía, siguiendo desembarazada y libre por su camino, si es de buena ley y de alto vuelo, al llegar a su término, tiene que parar en la moral más perfecta y pura que se concibe en la época en el que el poeta vive’ (*OC*, II, 830) (‘poetry is not at its [morality’s] service, nor is it its aim; but if poetry follows its course unhindered and freely, and is based on sound principles and of elevated ambition, it will inevitably gravitate towards the most perfect and pure moral of the age in which its creator lives’).

To appreciate this it is necessary to understand that Valera’s belief that art’s aim and purpose is ‘la creación de la belleza; dar pasatiempo, solaz y alegría al espíritu y elevarle a esferas superiores por la contemplación de lo ideal y de lo que se acerca a lo perfecto’ (*OC*, II, 902) (‘the creation of beauty; to entertain, to bring solace and joy to the spirit and to transport it to a higher realm through the contemplation of the ideal and what approaches perfection’). By this measure, subject matter likely to offend the reader’s sensibility is only acceptable if presented in a suitably innocuous (dis)guise: ‘La alegría, la ligereza, el aire improvisible e irreflexivo lo disculpa todo’ (*OC*, II, 830) (‘Anything is acceptable as long as it is treated in a lighthearted manner, and not dwelt upon too insistently’). The only literary pessimist Valera is prepared to tolerate is a ‘pesimista estético’ (‘an aesthetically acceptable pessimist’) (*OC*, II, 462).

²³ *Alma contemporánea. Estudio de estética* (Huesca: Leandro Pérez, 1899).

²⁴ *Baudelaire in Translation*, edited by Carol Clark and Robert Sykes (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1997), p. xvii. Subsequent references to this work will be given in parentheses in the main body of the introduction.

²⁵ Gerardo Alfonso, *La cima* (La Habana: Big Music, 2009).

²⁶ *La recepción y traducción de Les Fleurs du mal en España* pp. 18, 78-87.

²⁷ An instructive example, were one to attempt such a study, is Brenda R. Silver’s *Virginia Woolf Icon* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999), in which the Preface (pp. xv-xvii) and the Introduction (pp. 1-31) alone provide a useful conceptual contextualization of a writer’s transformation into icon. Explorations of ‘daily life’, the space in which ephemera sit, such as Michel de Certeau’s *Arts de faire (L’Invention du quotidien: Arts de faire)* (Paris: Union Générale d’éditions, 1980), published in English version as *The Practice of Everyday Life*, translated by Steven F. Rendall (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 1984)) also stands to provide a useful perspective from which to consider iconization of the literary.

²⁸ < <http://prensahistorica.mcu.es/es/estaticos/contenido.cmd?pagina=estaticos/presentacion> > [accessed 2 May 2014].